

Drawings

1. The replacement drawings were received on March 30, 2006. These drawings are acceptable.

Examiner's Amendment

2. An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Mr. Brinton Yorks on November 1, 2011.

The application has been amended as follows:

For claim 1, insert after "station" (line 13) --;providing said home station as a mechanical key reset device that resets the reminder alarm when mechanically engaged with said reminder alarm; and including a key controller in said provided reminder alarm that resets said reminder alarm to said default timeout configuration on mechanical engagement with the mechanical key reset device—.

For claim 11, insert after "configuration" (line 16) --; said home station is a mechanical key reset device that resets the reminder alarm when mechanically engaged with said reminder alarm; and said reminder alarm further comprises a key controller that resets said reminder alarm to said default timeout configuration on mechanical engagement with the mechanical key reset device--.

Cancel claims 9 and 19.

Allowable Subject Matter

3. Claims 1-8, 10-18 and 20 are allowed.

The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

For claim 1, A method for notification of return of equipment having at least one function to a home station, comprising the steps of: providing said equipment with an integral reminder alarm and reminder alarm timeout for return of the equipment to the home station, said reminder alarm timeout having a default timeout configuration; optionally configuring the reminder alarm timeout configuration at the home station; arming the reminder alarm timeout; and when the timeout expires, generating the reminder alarm from the equipment to return the equipment to the home station; providing said home station as a mechanical key reset device that resets the reminder alarm when mechanically engaged with said reminder alarm; and including a key controller in said provided reminder alarm that resets said reminder alarm to said default timeout configuration on mechanical engagement with the mechanical key reset device.

For claim 11, An apparatus for notification that equipment having at least one function is due for return to a home station, comprising: a reminder alarm integral to the equipment for notification that the equipment is due for return to the home station, said reminder alarm having a default timeout configuration; a timeout device; and a control device to optionally configure the reminder alarm timeout configuration at the home station, and arm the timeout device with the configured timeout, and when the timeout

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expires, generate a reminder alarm to return the equipment to the home station, said alarm generating according to the timeout configuration; said home station is a mechanical key reset device that resets the reminder alarm when mechanically engaged with said reminder alarm; and said reminder alarm further comprises a key controller that resets said reminder alarm to said default timeout configuration on mechanical engagement with the mechanical key reset device

Moreover, the prior art indicates that this particular method and apparatus is novel and has not been published or patented by other entities.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Conclusion

4. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure:

Yamaguchi et al. (US 2002/0184122 A1) discloses medical equipment which is rented and determines the amount of work performed by the medical equipment in order to charge for equipment usage.

Green (US 4,624,578) discloses a rental reminder alarm that displays rental expiration time as well as visible and audible alarms to warn of the approach of the end of the rental period.

Arshad et al. (US 2002/0084887 A1) discloses a transponder communication system wherein data is downloaded to a vehicle such as service reminders and vehicle rental period expiration.

Collart (US 2002/0091575 A1) discloses a database including DVD identifiers (parags 0240-0244) which indicates that the DVD is meant for rental or retail sales and whether the DVD is being properly rented which allows control of the usage of the rented DVD by complying with a rental agreement which only allow the DVD to be played a predetermined number of times. When the number of DVD plays has been exceeded, a server blocks play of the DVD. When the DVD is returned by the customer to the rental establishment, the tally in the database is reset to zero.

5. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Jennifer Mehmood whose telephone number is (571) 272.2976. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F from 8:00am to 4:30pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Mr. Benjamin Lee, can be reached at (571) 272.2963. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (571) 273.8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should

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you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

/Jennifer Mehmood/
Acting SPE of Art Unit 2612
November 3, 2011